

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5767

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0275

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR SF

SUBJ: SAG RESPONSE ON NAMIBIA

REF: A) STATE 037592; B) STATE 043645; C) CAPE TOWN 0166

1. SAG RESPONSE TO OUR APPROACH ON NAMIBIA REFLECTS FIRMNESS OF DECISION TAKEN LAST NOVEMBER TO PRESS FORWARD WITH TURNHALLE AS ALTERNATIVE MOST LIKELY TO SERVE SOUTH AFRICA'S LONGER TERM INTERESTS AS THEY PERCEIVE IT. I DOUBT VERY MUCH WHETHER AT THIS STAGE SAG CAN BE DIVERTED FROM FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH TURNHALLE FORMULA UNLESS: (A) PROSPECTIVE REFERENDUM IN THE WHITE COMMUNITY (PRETORIA 893) DERAILS THE WHOLE EFFORT, OR (B) THERE IS BASIC CHANGE IN SWAPO ATTITUDE AND CONDITIONS.

2. A NUMBER OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO SAG GROWING INFLEXIBILITY ON TURNHALLE. FAILURE OF THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE TO MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT HEADWAY WITH SAM NUJOMA AND GROWING SWAPO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES ALONG ANGOLA-NAMIBIA BORDER DURING THIS PERIOD WERE AMONG THE MAIN REASONS FOR DECISION TO PRESS FORWARD WITH TURNHALLE. EXPERIENCE WITH GENEVA TALKS ON RHODESIA HIGHLIGHTED DIFFICULTIES IN TRYING TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH BLACK NATIONALISTS. RECENT STATEMENTS

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BY NUJOMA AND OTHER SWAPO LEADERS ARE REGARDED BY SOUTH AFRICANS AS UNDERSCORING SWAPO INTRANSIGENCE AND THEREFORE FUTILITY OF TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM. PLBLIC STATEMENTS BY US SPOKESMEN REGARDING MAJORITY RULE FOR NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA HAVE INCREASED SAG APPREHENSION OVER USG'S ABILITY TO PLAY ROLE OF DISINTERESTED BROKER IN HELPING TO WORK OUT AN ACCEPTABLE

SOLUTION.

3. FACED WITH WHAT HE REGARDS AS AN UNPROMISING NEGOTIATING SITUATION, VORSTER HAS IN EFFECT DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH HIS OWN "INTERNAL SOLUTION" FOR NAMIBIA AND TAKE HIS CHANCES THAT TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE WILL EVENTUALLY BRING ABOUT ACQUIESCENCE, IF NOT ACCEPTANCE, BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY. IF HE CAN GET THE WHITES IN SOUTH WEST TO ACCEPT BLACK AND BROWN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT AS NOW CONTEMPLATED IN THE TURNHALLE PROPOSALS AND THROUGH THAT ACCEPTANCE GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE TURNHALLE SOLUTION FROM HIS AFRIKANER CONSTITUENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA, HE WILL HAVE PASSED WHAT HE REGARDS AS A MAJOR POLITICAL HURDLE AT HOME. WITH THIS ACHIEVED, HE WILL SEE WHAT ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT BE MADE IN ALONG THE WAY THE TURNHALLE FORMULA TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCEPTABLE TO WESTERN COUNTRIES AND THIRD WORLD MODERATES. I HAVE NO SPECIFIC INSIGHT INTO THE "BASIC POINTS" WHICH BOTHA SAID SAG WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS BUT AMONG THEM MAY WELL BE WAYS IN WHICH THE US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES MIGHT ASSIST IN HELPING TO OVERCOME SOME OF THE OJECTIONS TO THE TURNHALLE, SUCH AS IN HOLDING COUNTRY-WIDE REFERENDUM OF FINAL CONSTITUTION MENTIONED BY MUDGE (CAPE TOWN 0164).

4. FROM THE US STANDPOINT, IT IS PREFERABLE TO HAVE TURNHALLE AND SWAPO MEET AND WORK OUT A SOLUTION AMONG THEMSELVES AS CONTEMPLATED IN THE SEVEN POINTS. BUT AT THIS STAGE I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT VORSTER OR THE TURNHALLE CAN BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT ANOTHER HIATUS

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UNLESS THERE ARE CONCRETE INDICATIONS OF BASIC CHANGES IN THE SWAPO CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO SUCH POINTS AS PRIOR COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS AND NEGOTIATIONS DIRECTLY WITH THE SAG. THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE WHAT THESE POSSIBILITIES ARE. IN THE END I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE MOST THAT CAN BE HOPED FOR IS TO ALLOW TURNHALLE TO FOLLOW ITS COURSE WITHOUT EITHER ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION AND TO INTRODUCE (PREFERABLY WHILE THE TURNHALLE IS STILL FUNCTIONING) A MECHANISM THAT WILL ASSURE UN INVOLVEMENT AND SWAPO PARTICIPATION IN FASHIONING THE FINAL CONSTITUTION FOR AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1978. THIS APPROACH MAY REPRESENT GREATER TACIT ENDORSEMENT OF THE RESULTS OF TURNHALLE THAN SWAPO, THE BLACK AFRICANS AND THE UN MAY BE WILLING TO ACCEPT. IT MAY ALSO REPRESENT A GREATER RISK THAN VORSTER AND THE TURNHALLE MAY BE WILLING TO VENTURE. BUT IT COULD AFFORD A PRACTICAL, DEMOCRATIC WAY FOR OVERCOMING SAG-TURNHALLE OBJECTION

TO UN INVOLVEMENT AND TESTING SWAPO'S REAL STRENGTH
INSIDE NAMIBIA.

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EXDIS

5. ESSENCIALLY WHAT MUST BE TRADED IS TOLERANCE OF WHAT
THE SAG-TURNHALLE HAVE DONE TO DATE AND CESSATION OF
SWAPO TERRORIST OPERATIONS FOR RELEASE OF POLITICAL
PRISONERS AND CLEAR-CUT COMMITMENTS BY THE SAG-TURNHALLE
THAT (A) THE UN WILL PLAY A ROLE IN LEADING NAMIBIA
TO INDEPENDENCE, AND (B) SWAPO WILL HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY
TO ESTABLISH ITS TRUE FOLLOWING, AND PARTICIPATE ON THE
BASIS OF THAT FOLLOWING, IN THE MECHANISM ESTABLISHED
TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT. THIS MIGHT BE
ACHIEVED IF THE UN WERE ALLOWED TO (A) PARTICIPATE IN
ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES
TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY
HAVE TO BE CONVENED TO WRITE THE FINAL CONSTITUTION,
(B) OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE,
AND (C) REMAIN IN SWJ TO OVERSEE THE TRANSITION
TO INDEPENDENCE. A SUBSTANTIAL UN PRESENCE FOR
THIS PURPOSE, COUPLED WITH RELEASE OF POLITICAL
PRISONERS WHICH WOULD BE THE COUNTERPART TO CESSATION
OF SWAPO GUERRILLA OPERATIONS, WOULD BE REASSURING
TO SWAPO AS IT CAMPAIGNS FOR, AND PARTICIPATES IN, THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. UNDER THIS KIND OF ARRANGEMENT,
GZ SHOULD BE TGLERABLE TO ALLOW SAG-TURNHALLE TO PROCEED
WITH THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AS NOW CONTEMPLATED IN THE
CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS IS A PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENT.
FURTHERMORE, ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

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MIGHT BE DONE ON AN ETHNIC GROUP AND AT-LARGE BASIS WHICH WOULD REFLECT THE TURNHALLE APPROACH AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVE SWAPO AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE WITHIN POPULATION GROUPS AS WELL AS ON A NATIONAL SCALE. IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE WILLING TO ENTERTAIN SUCH A PROPOSAL, THEY MIGHT PERSUADE THE TURNHALLE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN CONSULTING WALDHEIM AND KEY BLACK AFRICAN LEADERS OR TO ASK THE SAG TO DO SO ON THEIR BEHALF.

6. FOR THE MOMENT WE NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT THE "BASIC POINTS" ARE THAT BOTHA WANTS TO DISCUSS. I AM SKEPTICAL THAT AT THIS LATE STAGE HE WILL ADVANCE PROPOSALS FOR TRYING TO BRING SWAPO AND TURNHALLE TOGETHER ALONG THE LINES OF THE SEVEN POINTS. HE IS MORE LIKELY TO EXPLORE WHAT THE US AND OTHER WESTERN STATES WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE TURNHALLE DO TO MAKE IT MORE ACCEPTABLE, INCLUDING INVOLVEMENT IN SOME KIND OF REFERENDUM. ONCE BOTHA HAS DISCLOSED WHAT THE SAG HAS IN MIND, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITIES WHICH MIGHT BE DISCLOSED.
BOWDLER

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